

# METRO

The Portland Observer

## Driven by Volleyball and Academics

Amy Henley headed to  
Jackson State  
See Sports, page B6



35  
years of  
community service

SECTION B

### Community Calendar

#### Portland School Board Candidate Forum

Candidates for the Portland school board will appear before the public on Thursday, May 5 at 6:30 p.m. at school district headquarters, 501 N. Dixon St. The event is co-sponsored by the Urban League of Portland. The election to replace three school board members will take place on May 17 but this is an opportunity to hear from prospective candidates.

#### Health and Safety Fair

On Saturday, May 7, King Neighborhood Association along with King SUN School is sponsoring a health and safety fair at the King Elementary School Cafeteria 4906 N.E. Sixth Ave. from 1-4 p.m. There will also be music, food and prizes. For more information, contact Kristen McKee 503-335-2717

#### LIFE Center Farewell

On Saturday, May 7, the LIFE Center Board of Directors has invited all volunteers, past employees, community leaders, partner agencies and supporters to a farewell celebration at the center located at 2746 N.E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. from noon to 4 p.m.

#### Neil Kelly Awards Luncheon

On Friday, May 6 at 11:30 a.m. four students and five businesses will be honored for their excellence in community issues. The Rotary Club of Albina and the North/Northeast Business Association sponsor this event. Tickets are \$50 and \$30 is a donation.

#### Kids' Learn Safety

On Saturday, May 7, join American Medical Response and Portland-Metro Kids Coalition at the Oregon Zoo on May 7 for hands-on activities to learn more about safety in and out of the home. There will be prizes for kids who complete the scavenger hunt for safety. The event starts at 10 a.m.

#### 'Stamp Out' Hunger

The 11<sup>th</sup> annual National Association of Letter Carriers Food Drive is held this month. Fill designated bags with non-perishable, canned foods and on Saturday May 14, a postal worker will collect them. Information at [www.oregonfoodbank.org](http://www.oregonfoodbank.org)

#### Lunch with the Grrl's

Saturday May 21, DinnerGrrl's will be hosting their spring potluck. The goal is build broaden professional horizons of women, network and to encourage other women in their career aspirations. For more information please RSVP by email at [Portland@dinnergrrls.org](mailto:Portland@dinnergrrls.org).

#### Great Strides Walk-a-Thon

Join the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation on Saturday, May 21 at 10 a.m. for their annual walk-a-thon. The group welcomes walkers, volunteers and donations for more information or to register contact Oregon Chapter Cystic Fibrosis Foundation at 503-226-3435 or [www.cff.org](http://www.cff.org)

#### Be a Hospice Volunteer

Providence Hospital offers free training for volunteers at least 18 years old who can commit four hours a week for a year. Pre-registration is required. For more information or to get an application packet please call Cynthia Cohen, volunteer coordinator at 503-215-5774

#### Women Mentors

Women in Community Service are seeking volunteer mentors for female offenders at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility. Mentors provide support and encouragement to women transitioning from prison. Mentors must be female, 24 or older. Call 503-570-6614.

## Breaking the Color Barrier in Cycling



### Local coach guides first black team

BY JENNIFER BRINKMAN

As they bowed their heads in prayer, the crowd roared. Finally, the moment Team Marshall had prepared six months for was here. Indiana University's "Little 500" bicycle race was about to begin.

The first all African-American women's team in the history of the 55-year-old race had some local flavor to help on their journey.

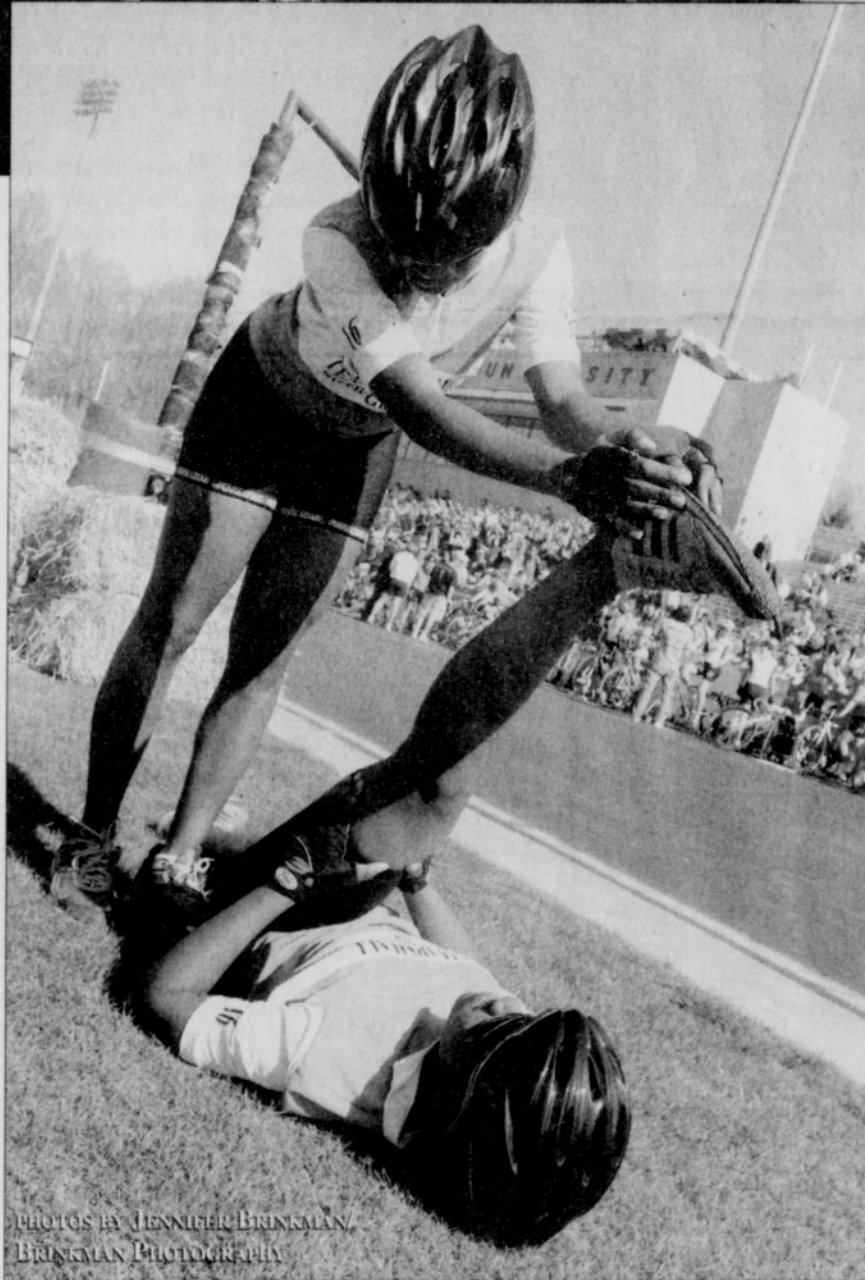
John Benenate, director of b.i.k.e. (Bicycles and Ideas for Kids' Empowerment) has been coaching Portland kids and adults for 12 years, bringing diversity into the sport on a local level.

Once a bicycle messenger and a collegiate racer, a tragic fall from a high deck left him a paraplegic. Though he could not ride like he used to, he decided to devote his life to the world of cycling and to change the face of the sport by developing the skills of "non-traditional racers."

He has found enormous success in Portland reaching out to women, especially elders and minorities, especially African American youth.

Since Tiger Woods became the brown face of golf, African-Americans have made their mark in other sports that were considered "for whites only," such as racecar driving, hockey and the Olympic Jamaican bobsled team. The face of cycling soon may not belong to Lance Armstrong.

Team Marshall was a rookie cycling team consisting of six young women from Indiana Univer-



PHOTOS BY JENNIFER BRINKMAN  
BRINKMAN PHOTOGRAPHY

Jeria Datson helps Nilaja Neely do some pre-race yoga.

TEAM MARSHALL: Nitaja Neely, Tiffany Brown, Jeria Datson and Olivia Fradin are all smiles as they get set to race as the first all African-American women's team the Little 500 cycling tournament in Bloomington, Ind.

sity. Their dream was to become the first all African-American women's team to compete in the famous 55-year-old race and one of the few teams of color in the sport.

Last August, IU freshman Olivia Fradin emailed Benenate, asking him to come to Bloomington to help her team succeed.

It had been two months since her classmates decided to form a cycling team, but coach after coach left them for other things, and team spirit was in low ebb.

"I felt like we are passed from coach to coach like some kind of charity case," Marshall teammate Jeria Datson said.

Benenate could not refuse.

Passion for the sport of cycling lives with in Benenate and he has made it his personal mission to "change the face of American cycling, one pedal stroke at a time." Starting with Team Marshall seemed to be the way to start.

Benenate coached the team via the Internet at first, urging them to keep their resting pulse rates and do yoga. After sending clothing, tools, bicycles and trainers, he was on his way for a visit. However, Benenate

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PHOTO COURTESY PORTLAND-GUADALAJARA SISTER CITY ASSOCIATION  
The beautiful costumes of Mexico give grandeur to an opera performance by local children at Cinco De Mayo on the downtown Portland waterfront. Arts, music and culture are part of the annual four-day celebration opening Thursday.

## Cinco de Mayo Begins Thursday

Fiesta keeps the party  
going over four days

The 21st Annual Cinco de Mayo Fiesta will kick off its celebration of "Family, Culture, and Community" on Thursday, May 5, and will keep the party going through Sunday, May 8, at Tom McCall Waterfront Park.

The Portland-Guadalajara Sister City Association, the non-profit organization responsible for coordination of the fiesta, brings this celebration of Latino arts, music, culture, and tradition to Portland and anticipates approximately 300,000 people to attend over the duration of the celebration.

The largest multi-cultural festival in Oregon is a wonderful opportunity for families to enjoy the dancing, music, colors, tastes, and crafts from Portland's sister city of Guadalajara, Mexico.

Portland Mayor Tom Potter and Guadalajara Mayor Emilio X will officially open the Fiesta with a ribbon cutting at Waterfront Park at the Main Stage Thursday at 10 a.m. The ceremony will include an audience of 1,300 elementary and middle school students, mostly from public schools in the Port-

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